

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

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Fall 1989 Volume 59 Number 4



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

# CONTENTS

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MEET AN IOWA BIRDER: ROBERT F. VANE . . . . .	101
<i>Carl J. Bendorf</i>	
HOUSE FINCHES IN DES MOINES YARD . . . . .	104
<i>Michael Thomas</i>	
BIG DAY COUNTS 1989 . . . . .	106
<i>Raymond L. Cummins</i>	
FIELD REPORTS—SUMMER 1989 . . . . .	108
<i>James J. Dinsmore</i>	
RED-THROATED LOONS AT LAKE MANAWA . . . . .	117
<i>Robert K. Myers</i>	
MISSISSIPPI KITE AT DUDGEON LAKE . . . . .	118
<i>David J. Conrads, Marc Phelps, and Thomas H. Kent</i>	
SLATY-BACKED GULL IN SCOTT COUNTY . . . . .	121
<i>James Fuller</i>	
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD IN PALO ALTO COUNTY . . . . .	124
<i>Ed Thelen</i>	
REVIEWS . . . . .	125
<i>Waterfowl—An Identification Guide to the Ducks, Geese, and Swans of the World</i>	
<i>Ornithology—An Ecological Approach</i>	
<i>Atlas of wintering North American Birds—An Analysis of Christmas Bird Count Data</i>	
LETTERS . . . . .	128
<i>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: Nicholas S. Halmi</i>	

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FRONT COVER: Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, near Crawfordsville, 29 June 1989. Photo by T. H. Kent.

INSIDE BACK COVER: Editorial Staff, Subscription/Membership Information, Instructions to Authors, Officers, Board of Directors, Standing Committees.

BACK COVER: Meeting Dates, Report Deadlines, Birdline, Materials Available.

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The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *Iowa Bird Life* and *I.O.U. News* are quarterly publications of the Union.

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Thomas H. Kent, Editor, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246  
Carl J. Bendorf, Circulation & Fall Field Reports Editor, 845 Cypress Ct., Iowa City, IA 52245  
W. Ross Silcock, Christmas Bird Count & Winter Field Reports Editor, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653  
Stephen J. Dinsmore, Spring Field Reports Editor, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010  
James J. Dinsmore, Summer Field Reports Editor, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

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Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand printed in ink on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor.

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## UPCOMING MEETINGS OF IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

\*17-20 May 1990, La Crosse, Wisconsin (joint meeting with Minnesota and Wisconsin)

## FIELD REPORTS

Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

\*Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)—3 March (W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653)

\*Spring (Mar, Apr, May)—3 June (Stephen J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)

\*Summer (Jun, Jul)—3 August (James J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)

\*Fall (Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov)—3 December (Carl J. Bendorf, 845 Cypress Ct., Iowa City, IA 52245)

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

\*Deadline for receipt of reports: 15 January. For forms and instructions write: W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.

## IOWA BIRDLINE 319-338-9881

The birdline is a recorded summary of interesting recent bird sightings in Iowa. At the end of the report you can leave a message and report recent sightings. Be sure to give your name and phone number as well as the location of the bird and date seen. Call in as soon as possible after sighting a rare bird. Jim Fuller checks the reports daily and updates the recording on Monday, so make sure Sunday sightings are reported by Sunday night.

## I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056).

## MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following materials may be obtained by writing the editorial office (Iowa Bird Life, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246):

\*Order form for back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*: send self-addressed stamped envelope.

\*Field Checklist of Iowa Birds—1987 Edition: 10 for \$1.65, 25 for \$3.50, 100 for \$11.60, postpaid.

Also available at annual meetings for \$0.10 each.

## REPORTING NEBRASKA BIRDS

Sightings of Nebraska birds, including those within the Nebraska portion of De Soto N.W.R., should be reported to Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005. Formats for reporting and documentation are the same as for Iowa.

## ADDRESS CHANGES

Please send address changes/corrections to Francis Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703.

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## MEET AN IOWA BIRDER: ROBERT F. VANE

CARL J. BENDORF



It is often said that one gains from an activity in direct proportion to the contribution made. Few I.O.U. members exemplify this better than Bob Vane. He has contributed immeasurably to the interest and enjoyment of other birders. Yet, he will point first to the joys and satisfactions he has gained from his lifelong involvement with the world of birding.

Bob's life with birds began very early. His father, Dr. L. F. Vane, had a keen interest in natural history and he would point out and identify common species on family picnics around the Cedar Rapids area. A natural history magazine that arrived in the Vane home every month was eagerly devoured. Bob confirmed many of his early sightings with the aid of a Chester Reed field guide received for Christmas in 1923 at age 9. In place of today's baseball cards, Bob collected and studied the small portraits of birds that came in the Arm & Hammer baking soda boxes. He still has a small book with lists of birds that were seen by his father around the turn of the century.

This early exposure to birds stuck with Bob and in 1939, he enrolled in an ornithology class taught by Warren Keck, professor of biology at Coe College. Dr. Keck was a marvelous teacher, and Bob still has his class notes. Keck's activity in the local and state organizations, stimulated Bob to join the Cedar Rapids Bird Club in 1939 and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1940.

Around this same time, Bob met his future wife, Jean. During one of their first dates, he pulled up to her apartment and she noticed a pile of books in the back seat of his car. At first, he told her they were for a dental course he was teaching, but they were actually his material for Dr. Keck's bird class.

During a drive on another early date, Bob couldn't resist stopping to look at a flooded field near Cedar Rapids to show Jean a flock of Lesser Golden-Plover. He recalls now that she wasn't as impressed as she should have been! Nevertheless, Bob and Jean were married on 8 August 1942 in La Jolla, CA.

Bob was born in Cedar Rapids on 18 December 1914 and attended Cedar Rapids public schools. After graduation from Washington High in 1932, he enrolled at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Inspired by his father's profession, he went on to dental school in Iowa City and graduated in 1937. After an internship at University Hospital, Bob joined his father's general practice in Cedar Rapids in 1939.

Bob volunteered for the U.S. Navy Dental Corps in 1942 and served for four years. The first year was spent working in a Navy mobile hospital in New Zealand where he assisted in treating casualties from action in the South Pacific. After returning from overseas, Bob was stationed for a year at the Navy pre-flight school in Iowa City. With time off from Friday to Monday noon, Bob and Jean, Fred and Clara Kent, and Peter and Marguerite Laude were able to make numerous birding trips in the Iowa City area by pooling gas rationing cards. Fred Kent always had a camera in his hand and some of it rubbed off. Bob borrowed a 16-millimeter movie camera from his father and started taking films from the window of their little cottage in Iowa City. The first subject was birds on a winter feeder and the result was a film called "Feathers through the Lens". With Fred Kent's encouragement, Bob later made more films including "Swan Lake Field Trips", which included a Least Bittern nest sequence, and "To Forest and Stream" highlighted by footage of a Prothonotary Warbler nest. Bob later made films on winter birding featuring Red Crossbills and Snowy and Saw-whet owls and one set in his Cedar Rapids backyard entitled "Hummingbird Summer". These and other shorter films were a regular feature at I.O.U. annual meetings and were also shared with groups such as the Cedar Rapids and Des Moines Audubon societies.

After his discharge from the Navy, Bob returned to Cedar Rapids and developed his practice in oral surgery. His careful and caring manner and strong work ethic has carried him through 50 years of active dental practice.

In the 1940s, the Cedar Rapids Bird Club had a strong following. Bob recalls that the Kents and the Laudes would drive up from Iowa City for nearly every meeting. Other regulars included Harold Ennis and Al Meyer. This ardent group of birders would often sit together in the back row at meetings and carry on their own conversations in whispers under the frowning countenance of President Myra Willis. Bob served as president of the club in 1947-50 and also 1961-1963.

Bob attended his first I.O.U. meeting in May 1940 at Dubuque and he remembers his amazement at the ability of Walter Rosene to pick out the song of a Cerulean Warbler high overhead during a field trip along the Mississippi River. In the ensuing years, Bob and Jean traveled to all corners of the state attending I.O.U. meetings. Always well liked and respected, Bob was elected to the Executive Council in 1945 and then served as Vice President from 1946 to 1950. Bob was tapped for his leadership skills again in May 1964 when he was elected I.O.U. President. After serving admirably through 1966, he was again elected to the Executive Council for 1966-67. Not

to be outdone, Jean served as Vice President in 1968-69. Bob also chaired the field checklist committee in 1968.

Bob's real love has always been enjoying birds with his friends and his family. Many of his careful observations of birds and of people are recorded in his 13 notes and 10 articles contributed to *Iowa Bird Life*. Three of the articles were co-authored with his frequent companion, Fred Kent. Bob has paid loving tribute to Fred and other I.O.U. friends with his thoughtful memorials in *Iowa Bird Life*.

In 1962, Bob and Jean attended the meetings of the International Ornithological Congress at Ithaca, New York. Four years later, they traveled to the same meeting in Oxford, England. On this latter trip, they joined a number of distinguished ornithologists from around the world on a field trip by 800-passenger boat to the nesting colonies of seabirds to the north of Scotland. Jean jokes that if the boat had gone down, world ornithology might have been set back 800 years! Also on this trip they renewed a friendship with Olin Sewall Pettingill, then director of the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell.

Bob and Jean have two children: Julie and Rob. Five grandchildren are helping to carry on the traditional family interest in natural history, and Rob's three sons recently helped put up a bluebird house in their Michigan backyard.

In 1973, Bob, Jean, and Rob joined Audubon speaker Edgar Jones on a flying tour north of the Arctic Circle. They saw only 32 species of birds, but found nests of 27, including Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Bob recalls holding Red Phalarope chicks in his hand while the adult birds nibbled at his fingers. Other memorable birding trips included journeys to Colorado, Maine, and Minnesota.

For the last 20 years, the Vanes have spent the month of March on Sanibel Island, off Florida's Gulf Coast. These trips have led to a great interest in collecting sea shells, and Bob has carefully identified and mounted the best finds. They have also collected shells on three trips to the Bahamas and on a circumnavigation of the Baja Peninsula.

Through his travels, friendships and inquisitive mind, Bob has collected a very impressive library of ornithological literature. His books are carefully shelved and also carefully read. Besides a number of state bird books, Bob has many other publications ranging from a valuable three volume set of Wilson's American Ornithology printed in 1876 to a complete set of *Iowa Bird Life*. Bob and Jean's gracious home in Cedar Rapids is beautifully accented with various bird related prints and other art pieces, each one with its own fascinating story.

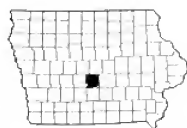
I first met Bob and Jean in 1976 when their son Rob took me along on my first Christmas Bird Count. The Vanes made quite an impression on me with their hospitality and generous spirit. I remember Bob telling me then that I was getting involved in the same lifelong hobby that had led him down so many different paths. From field trips to film making, from travel to book collecting, and with family and friends, Bob Vane has both given and received a great deal from his life with birds.

845 Cypress Ct., Iowa City, IA 52245

# HOUSE FINCHES IN A DES MOINES YARD

MICHAEL THOMAS

House Finches have been spreading westward from the East Coast since 1953. The first reached Iowa in 1982 (Dinsmore et al. 1984). There were four reports in 1982 and three in 1983, but none in 1984. In 1985, there were five reports, and one appeared on a Christmas Bird Count for the first time. In 1986, nesting was verified for the first time in Iowa (Dinsmore and Petersen 1986), and 13 were recorded on Christmas Bird Counts. In 1987, many nestings were reported, and 33 were recorded on Christmas Bird Counts. In 1988, numbers jumped with 215 recorded on Christmas Bird Counts, and the westward expansion hit Des Moines in force.



The first pair of House Finches arrived in my backyard in Des Moines on 14 February 1988. From February 1988 through February 1989, I keep a log of the maximum number of House Finches seen in my yard at any one time each day. My backyard is small, with two large maple trees, several small shrubs and three evergreens. Fresh water, five to six sunflower and safflower feeders, and two niger and two mixed-seed feeders were maintained throughout the period.

The results of my observations are summarized by month (Table), including the maximum number of birds seen at one time on any day in the month, the lowest daily maximum (excluding days when no birds were seen), the average daily maximum for days that any birds were seen, and the number of days that any birds were seen. Observation time was none or minimal on days that birds were not seen.

House Finches in Des Moines Yard by Month

Month-Year	Daily Counts for Month			Days Seen per Month
	Maximum	Minimum	Average	
February 1988	3	1	2.1	15
March 1988	3	1	1.9	10
April 1988	4	1	2.2	21
May 1988	3	1	1.7	29
June 1988	7	1	2.6	29
July 1988	21	1	8.7	31
August 1988	27	1	12.1	31
September 1988	19	1	5.1	28
October 1988	27	2	14.1	31
November 1988	54	10	26.5	24
December 1988	45	12	23.7	29
January 1989	51	4	17.1	31
February 1989	76	13	34.8	14

From February to June 1988, the daily maximum was 4 (2 males and 2 females). Numbers increased rapidly after a pair was seen feeding two immatures on 15 June. Waves of fledglings were observed begging and being fed on 1, 21, 26-31 July, 15 August, and 5 September. It appeared that there were multiple successful nesting in Des Moines. The average daily counts rose



progressively (Table). On 2 February 1989, nearly one year after the first arrival, there were 76 House Finches at one time in my backyard.

The large increase in House Finches over the year appears to have been due to breeding success rather than any changes in the attractiveness of my backyard, because the same bird feeding conditions were maintained throughout the period. The large increase in House Finches during this period is further substantiated by the 110 birds at Glendale Cemetery (less than five blocks from my house) on 13 January 1989 (Silcock 1989) and the increased numbers on the 1988 Christmas Bird Count. The Field Reports in *Iowa Bird Life* continue to document the expansion of House Finch numbers and range in Iowa.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Dinsmore, J. J., et al. 1984. *Iowa Birds*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Dinsmore, S., and P. C. Petersen. 1986. First House Finches nesting in Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 56:122.
- Silcock, W. R. 1989. Field Reports—1988-1989. *Iowa Bird Life* 59: 47-55.

410 56th Street, Des Moines, IA 50312.

## BIG DAY COUNTS 1989

RAYMOND L. CUMMINS

Nine teams, including five at-large teams and four county teams, participated in the third annual Big Day Count sponsored by the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. Four teams participated for the first time: Van Buren Co., Team Trogan, East Davenport All-stars, and the Northward Troopers.

The teams, working under a rather normal spring migration pattern, sighted a record total of 217 species. The previous totals were 213 in 1988 and 198 in 1987. Of the 217 species, 23 were seen by only one team and 55 were seen by all teams.

The East Davenport All-stars broke the old record by one species. They spent 17 hours on 5 May in six different eastern Iowa counties to count 161 species. The old record was 160 species on 14 May 1988 by Tetrault's Tigers (Carl Bendorf, Tom Kent, and Francis Moore).

Two teams shattered the old county record of 112 species (set 14 May 1988 by Roger and Doug Rose). Team Rathbun spent 15.75 hours on 8 May to see 127 species in Appanoose Co; however, on 11 May the Big Deal Team birding in Woodbury County spent 17.5 hours to list a record 130 species.

The 1989 Big Day raised \$411.36 for the I.O.U. Leading the way was Team Rathbun with \$168 followed by Van Buren County with \$90.

The most abundant species was Red-winged Blackbird with 2,774, followed closely by Tree Swallow with a somewhat surprising 2,255. A summary by teams, locations, and best birds follows. Species seen by only one team are noted by \*.

Van Buren County captained by Carol Thompson with Jim Sandrock, Johanna Schafer, and Keith Schafer spent 7.0 hours in Van Buren County on 10 May and identify 104 species. The best birds were Black-crowned Night-Heron, Cooper's Hawk, Acadian Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler (8), and Summer Tanager.

The Big Deal Team captained by Bob Livermore with Jerry Probst and Dave Stage spent 17.5 hours in Woodbury County on 11 May to sight 130 species. The best birds were \*Eared Grebe, Greater White-fronted Goose, \*Redhead, Piping Plover, Marbled Godwit (6), Hudsonian Godwit (6), and Western Kingbird (3).

Team Rathbun captained by Ray Cummins with Bill Huseinkveld spent 15.75 hours in Appanoose County on 8 May to count 127 species. The best birds were Common Merganser, \*Northern Harrier, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

B. J.'s Boys captained by Doug Rose with Roger Rose spent 15.2 hours in Fremont County on 6 May with a total of 111 species. The best birds were Swainson's Hawk (5), \*Merlin, Piping Plover, Orange-crowned Warbler (50), Summer Tanager, Clay-colored Sparrow (25), and Harris Sparrow (75).

Team Trogan captained by Jim Sinclair with Ann Johnson, David Youngblut, and Beth Brown spent 15.0 hours in Boone, Greene, Guthrie, Dallas, Polk, and Warren counties on 15 May to spot 123 species. The best birds were Gray Partridge, Marbled Godwit, Western Kingbird, and \*Worm-eating Warbler.

The East Davenport All-stars captained by Pete Petersen with Brian Blevins and Don Moeller spent 17.0 hours in Louisa, Muscatine, Scott, Clinton, and Jones counties on 8 May to tally a record 161 species. The best birds were American Bittern (4), \*American Black Duck, Cinnamon Teal, \*Hooded Merganser, Gray Partridge, \*King Rail, Marbled Godwit, \*Bonaparte's Gull, \*Winter Wren, \*Cape May Warbler, \*Blackburnian Warbler, \*Pine Warbler, and \*Purple Finch.

Northward Troopers captained by Tom Kent with Bob Cecil spent 16.2 hours in Lee, Van Buren, Jefferson, Washington, Louisa, and Johnson counties on 7 May to spot 139 species. The best birds were American Bittern, Least Bittern, Cinnamon Teal, \*Canvasback, Gray Partridge, White-eyed Vireo, and \*Yellow-breasted Chat.

T, A & A Team captained by Gene Armstrong with Eloise Armstrong and Dennis Thompson spent 15.3 hours on 29 April and 16.3 hours on 12 May in Polk, Dallas, Boone, and Madison counties to see 129 and 148 species, respectively. The best birds on 29 April were \*Common Loon, \*Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Greater White-fronted Goose, \*White-winged Scoter, Gray Partridge, \*American Avocet, Baird's Sandpiper, \*Water Pipit, and \*Dark-eyed Junco. The best birds on 12 May were Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Baird's Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, and \*Canada Warbler.

609 S. Main, Centerville, IA 52544.

## FIELD REPORTS—SUMMER 1989

JAMES J. DINSMORE

### WEATHER

June was generally cool and dry; temperatures averaged 1.4 degrees below normal. They dropped to a low of 38 at Spencer and in the low 40s elsewhere the morning of 15 June and there was widespread frost in northcentral and northwest Iowa. Temperatures reached the 90s for a few days but did not exceed 100 during the month. The drought continued with rainfall 1 inch less than average for what is normally the wettest month of the year; it was the 7th driest June in 117 years. Only southwest and westcentral Iowa were above average. Much of that fell from 22 to 28 June, including 6.8 inches at Stanton in Montgomery County on 22 June.



July was a bit warmer but still cooler than 1988. The first half of the month was hot with temperatures above 100 on several days from 6 to 10 July; 102 at Sioux City on 10 July was the highest. Rainfall was a bit more normal, especially the widespread rain that fell on 17-19 July and gave much of the state 1-2 inches or more. Overall, July rainfall was about 0.5 inches below normal. For the year, rainfall was only 70 percent of normal with a shortfall of 5 inches, the eighth driest January-July on record. Clearly, we had not begun to recharge the shortfall from 1988.

### GENERAL TRENDS

Reports of nesting by several uncommon or hard-to-find species were highlights for the summer. These included American Bittern, Least Bittern, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, and Great-tailed Grackle. The release of Peregrine Falcons in Cedar Rapids hopefully will lead to the reestablishment of a nesting population of that species in Iowa. Carolina Wrens continued to recover, and Blue Grosbeaks seemed to have increased in northwest Iowa. There were more reports than ever of Henslow's Sparrows, suggesting that they are widespread, albeit rare, in southern Iowa. House Finches continued to increase in numbers with more reported than ever before. Gray Partridge continued to move south. The dry conditions in northwest and northcentral Iowa probably hurt nesting by species such as coots, Pied-billed Grebes, and ducks. Since conditions were even drier to the northwest of Iowa, some ducks from those areas may have relocated in Iowa, leading to the nesting Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, and Gadwall. Northern Pintail are usually adept at pioneering new areas when reliable ones are dry, but surprisingly few were in Iowa this summer. There were numerous reports of three other non-breeding aquatic birds (American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Ring-billed Gull) in Iowa this summer. Perhaps many of them were here because of the lack of water elsewhere.

## UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

For the third straight year, this was a fairly dull summer with only one Accidental species, Mississippi Kite. The only Casual species reported were Burrowing Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren, Great-tailed Grackle, and House Finch. Other good finds were Western Grebe, Common Merganser, Sandhill Crane, Dunlin, Bonaparte's Gull, Herring Gull, Winter Wren, and Clay-colored Sparrow, a much shorter list than for most summers. An exotic species, Chukar, was also reported.

## SPECIES DATA

\* = documented record; [ ] = record date

**Common Loon:** There were more reports than usual with up to 4 in Jun at Spirit L. (Ed Thelen fide SD) and 2 there on 18 Jul (SD, BB), 1 on 5 Jun at North Twin L. (Marty Eby fide SD), 1 in Adair Co. on 11 Jul (SD, BB), and 1 that summered at Rathbun Res. (RLC).

**Western Grebe:** Singles at Trumbull L. on 7 Jun (SD) and Saylorville Res. on 16 Jun (JF) were the only reports.

**American White Pelican:** There were numerous reports including 500+ in the Grover's and Hottes lake area in Jun and Jul (DCH), 850 at Rice L. on 16 Jul (SD), and 450 at Mud L. on 17 Jul (SD). One dumped egg was found at Grover's L. Smaller numbers were reported in Appanoose, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Emmet, Kossuth, Marion, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, and Wright counties.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Up to 16 were reported in Appanoose, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Des Moines, Dickinson, Emmet, Guthrie, Harrison, Kossuth, Marion, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Scott, Story, Van Buren and Wright counties. This is far more than any other recent year.

**American Bittern:** 2 nests were found at Union Slough N.W.R. in early Jun (JAG), the first for the state in several years.

**Least Bittern:** A nest with eggs was found in NW Palo Alto Co. in Jul (Lisa Hemesath fide JJD), and nesting was suspected in NE Madison Co. where the Armstrongs found them for the third straight year (EIA, EuA); 1 at Big Wall L. on 16 Jul (SD) was the only other report.

**Great Blue Heron:** A colony at West Swan L. had 13 nests (SD), and the colony at Saylorville Res. had 24 nests (BE). There were 3 small colonies in Ringgold and Decatur counties (Mel Moe fide SD). At Union Slough N.W.R. there were 73 on 17 Jul and 109 on 28 Jul (MK).

**Great Egret:** Up to 12 were seen in Allamakee, Appanoose, Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Des Moines, Dickinson, Emmet, Fremont, Guthrie, Hancock, Jasper, Marion, Palo Alto, Polk, and Worth counties, more than most summers.

**Snowy Egret:** An adult at Union Slough N.W.R. on 17 Jul (SD, details) was the only report.

**Little Blue Heron:** The only report was 3 immatures at Red Rock Res. on 25 Jul (SD).

**Cattle Egret:** The only report was 2 at Pierce Creek P., Page Co., on 7 Jun (BLW).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Many were seen in the Hottes L./Jemmerson Sl. area where nesting was suspected but not confirmed (DCH). There were numerous other reports of 1-12, most from NW Iowa.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** The only report was 2 at the Skunk River W.A., Jasper Co., on 6 Jul (HZ).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** 2 were at Union Slough N.W.R. until at least 11 Jul (MK, SD).

**Snow Goose:** 1 that summered in Poweshiek Co. (DK), 2 at Union Slough N.W.R. from 4 Jun-11 Jul (MK), 3 at Bays Branch through early Jul (SD), 1 at Elm L. on 6, 23 Jun (SD), 1 at Clear L. from 22 Jun to 16 Jul (SD), and 1 at Dan Green Sl. on 16, 17 Jul (JD, SD) were all the reports.

**Canada Goose:** Nesting success was probably lower than normal this year, but broods were still obvious throughout NW Iowa.

**Green-winged Teal:** 1 at Cone M. on 2 Jun (PA, ReA), 2 males at Dan Green Sl. on 5 Jun (JJD), 4 at Union Slough N.W.R. from 1 Jun to 13 Jul (MK), 2 on 10 Jun at Silver L., Worth Co. (JLW), 4 at Zirkel Sl. on 22 Jun (SD), and 1 at Russ W.A., Hancock/Winnebago counties, on 16 Jul (SD) were all the reports.

**American Black Duck:** A male was at Mud L. on 1, 3 Jul (SD).

**Northern Pintail:** 2 nests were found at Ventura M. in Jun (TL), and a brood was near Lake Park on 19 Jul (SD). A bird near Myre Sl., Winnebago Co., on 23 Jun (SD) was the only other report.

**Northern Shoveler:** There was more evidence of nesting than in most years: 12-15 nests at Union Slough N.W.R. (JAG), a nest at Ventura M. in Jun (TL), and a brood in NW Palo Alto Co. in Jul (Lisa Hemesath fide JJD). The only other reports were 3 males at Dan Green Sl. on 3 Jun (JJD) and 1 at Rathbun Res. on 9 Jul (SD).

**Gadwall:** There were 2 nests at Union Slough N.W.R. (JAG); 1-4 birds were reported in Adair, Appanoose, Clay, Pottawattamie, Worth, and Wright counties.

**American Wigeon:** A nest at Union Slough N.W.R. (JAG) is only the 3rd nesting record for Iowa. A bird was at Eagle L., Emmet Co., on 29 Jun (SD).

**Canvasback:** The only reports were 1 at Green Valley S.P., Union Co., on 15 Jun (RCe) and a male at Hottes L. on 2 Jul (SD, JJD).

**Redhead:** 5 pairs and 5 males were near Hottes L. on 3 Jun (JJD).

**Ring-necked Duck:** 1 at Pickerel L., Buena Vista Co., on 2 Jun (JJD), 2 at Cone M. on 5 Jun (JF), 3 at Hottes L. on 2 Jul (SD), and 1 at the IPL Ponds on 12 Jul (SD, BB) were all the reports.

**Lesser Scaup:** 2 at Ventura M. on 22 Jun (SD), 1 at Hottes L. on 2 Jul (SD), 2 at the IPL Ponds on 12 Jul (SD, BB), and 1 at Ventura M. on 17 Jul (SD) were all the reports.

**Hooded Merganser:** Broods were reported at Union Slough N.W.R. (MK) and Cheever L., Emmet Co. (SD); 1-3 birds were seen in Appanoose, Clay, Emmet, Guthrie, and Mills counties.

**Common Merganser:** A male was at Lakin Sl., Guthrie Co., through 13 Jul (SD, m.ob.) and a pair summered at Rathbun Res. (RLC, SD). This species is rare in summer in Iowa.

**Ruddy Duck:** There were 6 pairs at Rush L., Osceola Co., on 5 Jun (JJD), a brood at Hottes L. on 2 Jul (SD), and 6 males and 6 females at Silver L., Worth Co., on 10 Jun (JLW); 1-2 were at Cone M. through 22 Jul (JF), 1 was at the IPL Ponds on 4 Jun (JF), and 1 was at Rock Creek L., Jasper Co., on 13 Jun (SD).

**Turkey Vulture:** Nests were reported in Clay Co. (Tom Neal fide SD) and e of Clarinda (BLW), and a young bird was found in NW Page Co. (BLW); 17 near the Raccoon R. in Greene Co. on 11 Jun (SL) and 17 in Cherokee Co. on 2 Jul (DBi) were large concentrations for those locations.

**Osprey:** Singles were reported at West Okoboji L. on 13 Jun (NPB), along the Big Sioux R. in Sioux Co. on 4 Jul (Dan Rankeing fide JV), at Polk City W.A. on 16 Jul (EIA, EuA, PA, ReA), at Storm L. on 21 Jul (SD), and at Red Rock Res. on 30 Jul (EIA, EuA, PA, ReA) equalling all the reports of the previous five summers.

**Mississippi Kite:** A subadult found at Dudgeon L., Benton Co., on 5 Jun was joined by a second bird on 8 Jun; they were last seen on 9 Jun (DC, \*THK, \*SD, \*MPR, \*CJB, \*JF, \*RP, \*BPR, \*PCP, \*DP). This is the second recent record for Iowa.

**Bald Eagle:** An adult and 2 juveniles in Jackson Co. on 8 Jun (PCP) indicates 1 successful nest. I received reports of single adults in Clay Co. on 6 Jun (Clint Fraley fide DCH), at Union Slough N.W.R. on 22 Jun (MK), and at Prairie L., Dickinson Co. on 24 Jun (Jeff Drahota fide DCH); 1 immature was at Coralville Res. on 16 Jun (JF). These birds may be prospecting for nest sites and suggest further growth of the eagle nesting population.

**Northern Harrier:** Broods were found in Emmet Co. on 1 Jul (SD) and Guthrie Co. on 11 Jul (SD, BB); 1-2 in June in Appanoose, Johnson, and Muscatine counties possibly were nesting while the 1-2 found in Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Palo Alto, and Winnebago counties in July probably were early migrants.

**Cooper's Hawk:** An adult and 1 young were at Miami L., Monroe Co., on 17 Jun (SD); 3 nests in Winneshiek Co. produced at least 8 young (DK). Singles were at Oakland Mills P., Henry Co., on 14 Jun (SD), Clanton Creek W.A., Madison Co., on 18 Jun (RCe), Ledges S.P. on 21 Jun (SD), and S Van Buren Co. on 7 Jul (SD).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** A nest with young at Dudgeon L., Benton Co., on 6, 8 Jun (THK, MPR, PCP) was the only report.

**Broad-winged Hawk:** 1 at Shimek F. on 10 Jun (MPR, BPR) was not unexpected while 1 at Kindlespire P., Clay Co., was out of its normal range.

**Swainson's Hawk:** 1 was on a nest near Cedar Falls on 23 Jun (JF). Other reports were singles



*Young Red-shouldered Hawks on nest, Dudgeon L., 7 June 1889. Photo by Marc Phelps.*

- at 2 sites in O'Brien Co. on 3 Jun (DBi), nw of Hubbard on 2 Jun (MPR), in NW Palo Alto Co. on 3 Jun (Lisa Hemesath fide JJD), s of Algona on 25 Jun (MK), at Hacklebarney Woods, Montgomery Co., on 27 Jun (BLW), in N Warren Co. on 29 Jul (AJ), and 2 near Bluffton, Winneshiek Co., on 29 Jun (DK).
- Ferruginous Hawk:** A report will be referred to the Records Committee.
- American Kestrel:** Nests in the courthouse at Clarinda (BLW) and on Simpson College campus (JSi) indicate the adaptability of this species.
- Peregrine Falcon:** 4 young birds were brought to a release site in Cedar Rapids in late July in an attempt to reestablish a nesting population in Iowa.
- Gray Partridge:** Reports from Mills (BLW), Monroe (AJ), and Montgomery (DLR) counties were at the southern edge of this species' range.
- Chukar:** Several were released near Sioux Center in 1988; a nest with 12 eggs was found nearby in 1989 (JV).
- Northern Bobwhite:** Reports from Cherokee (DBi), Lyon (JV), and Sioux (JV) counties indicate they are doing well in NW Iowa.
- Virginia Rail:** The only reports were 1 at Lakin Sl. on 9 Jun (SD) and a brood at South Twin L. on 5 Jul (SD).
- Sora:** Singles in NW Palo Alto Co. on 4 Jun (JJD), at Hottes L. on 23 Jun (SD), and at Myre Sl., Winnebago Co., on 23 Jun (SD) were the only reports.
- Common Moorhen:** The only report was 1 at Myre Sl. on 23 Jun (SD).
- American Coot:** The only reports of nests were from Hottes L. and Myre Sl. (SD).
- Sandhill Crane:** I received a late report of 2 at Green Island W.A., Jackson Co., from 3 to 23 May (Darrell Jennings fide JJD); 2 were at Union Slough N.W.R. from mid-Jun to at least 29 Jun (JAG, SD), the first recent June record for Iowa.
- Lesser Golden-Plover:** 2 different birds were at Union Slough N.W.R.: 1 on 4, 13 Jun (MK) and the other on 27, 29 Jun, 4 Jul (MK). On 19 Jun there were 2 at Dan Green Sl. (JJD).
- Semipalmated Plover:** The last spring birds were 3 at Dan Green Sl. on 2 Jun (JJD). The first fall birds were singles on the Big Sioux R. in Sioux Co. on 1 Jul (Ken Hollinga fide JV)[record earliest] and at Union Slough N.W.R. on 11 Jul (MK)[3rd earliest].
- Piping Plover:** The only report was 2 at the IPL Ponds on 18 Jun (PA, ReA).
- Greater Yellowlegs:** 1 at Lizard L., Pocahontas Co., on 25 Jun (MK) and 2 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 27 Jun (MK) were presumably southbound; 2 at Eagle L., Emmet Co., on 29 Jun (SD) and 2 in W Emmet Co. on 30 Jun (SD) were also early.
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** The last spring birds were 3 at Dan Green Sl. on 2 Jun (SD). An early southbound migration was indicated by 2 at Myre Sl., Winnebago Co., on 23 Jun (SD), 14 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 27 Jun (MK), 37 in Emmet Co. on 30 Jun (SD), and 6 at Runnells W.A. on 30 Jun (AJ). An amazing 2,000 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 28 Jul (MK) is the most ever reported in Iowa.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** The first southbound birds were 2 on 24 Jun at Union Slough N.W.R. (MK)[2nd earliest]; 1 at Eagle L., Emmet Co., on 29 Jun (SD) and 2 at Twelve Mile L., Emmet Co., on 3 Jul (JJD) were also early, while 100 at Runnells W.A. on 8, 16, and 30 Jul (JSi, AJ) were decidedly unsolitary.
- Willet:** 1 was in NW Palo Alto Co. on 23 Jun (Phil Delphey fide JJD, details)[2nd earliest]. Others were 1 on 4 Jul at South Twin L. (SD), 4 on 11 Jul at Lakin Sl. (SD, BB), and 1 on 12 Jul at DeSoto N.W.R. (SD, BB).
- Upland Sandpiper:** I received reports from Adair, Appanoose, Boone, Clarke, Clinton, Dallas, Dickinson (nest), Emmet, Greene, Harrison (brood), Kossuth, Montgomery, Ringgold, Sioux, Story, Van Buren, and Wayne counties indicating that, although uncommon, this species is found almost statewide; only NE Iowa is unrepresented in that list.
- Marbled Godwit:** 1 was at Saylorville Res. on 29 Jul (BE, details)[2nd earliest].
- Sanderling:** 1 at the IPL Ponds on 20 Jul (TEB, BPa)[record earliest], 1 at Burlington on 22 Jul (JF)[ties 2nd earliest], and 2 at Rathbun Res. on 25 Jul (SD) indicate an early migration for this species.
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** The last spring bird was 1 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 13 Jun (MK). The first southbound birds were 1 at Oakland on 12 Jul (SD, BB), 20 at Runnells W.A. on 16 Jul (AJ), and 67 at South Twin L. on 21 Jul (SD).
- Western Sandpiper:** The only reports were 1 at Runnells W.A. on 8 and 16 Jul (JSi, AJ, details)[ties 2nd earliest] and 1 at Bays Branch W.A. on 13 Jul (SD, details).
- Least Sandpiper:** The last spring birds were 2 at Dan Green Sl. on 7 Jun (SD)[2nd latest]. The first fall bird was 1 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 27 Jun (MK, details)[3rd earliest]. There were 2 large concentrations reported: 122 at Silver L., Worth Co., on 16 Jul (SD) and 200 at Runnells W.A. on 8, 16 Jul (JSi, AJ).



- White-rumped Sandpiper:** The 210 at Dan Green Sl. on 3 Jun (JJD) dwindled to only 56 there on 7 Jun (SD); 2 at Orient L., Adair Co., on 9 Jun (SD), 30 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 13 Jun (MK), and 1 at Rathbun Res. on 18 Jun (SD) indicate a late migration for this species this year. The first presumed southbound bird was 1 at Dan Green Sl. on 1 Jul (SD).
- Baird's Sandpiper:** The only report was 3 at Runnells W.A. on 30 Jul (AJ).
- Pectoral Sandpiper:** The last spring birds were 1 at Dan Green Sl. on 7 Jun (SD) and 6 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 13 Jun (MK). The first fall birds were 1 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 29 Jun (SD) and 1 at High L. on 3 Jul (JJD). By the end of July there were several large concentrations including 300 at Runnells W.A. on 30 Jul (AJ) and 4,500 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 28 Jul (MK).
- Dunlin:** The only report was 1 at Rice L. on 16 Jul (\*SD) [2nd earliest].
- Stilt Sandpiper:** The last spring bird was 1 at Dan Green Sl. on 5 Jun (JJD, details) [2nd latest]. The first fall birds were 5 at Runnells W.A. on 8 Jul (JSi), 4 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 11 Jul (MK), and 1 at Oakland on 12 Jul (SD). By 28 Jul, there were 96 at Union Slough N.W.R. (MK).
- Short-billed Dowitcher:** The first fall bird was 1 at South Twin L. on 5 Jul (SD, details). There were 8 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 11 Jul (MK), 4 at Virgin L. on 16 Jul (JJD), and 2 at Runnells W.A. on 16 Jul (AJ).
- Wilson's Phalarope:** 2 were at Dan Green Sl. on 3 Jun and 1 was still there on 2 Jul (JJD); 2 others were near Hottes L. on 3 Jun. The first fall birds were 1 at Five Island L., Palo Alto Co., on 4 Jul (SD), 1 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 9 Jul (MK), and singles at East Twin L. and Rice L. on 16 Jul (SD).
- Franklin's Gull:** An incredible 1,500 flew past Cayler Prairie toward West Okoboji L. on 3 Jun (JJD); 185 at Clear L. on 6 Jun (SD) was also a high count for June. Besides those in the Great Lakes region, 7 were at Storm L. on 8 Jun (SD), 4 were at Red Rock Res. on 16 Jun (AJ), and 1 was at Rathbun Res. on 18 Jun (SD).
- Bonaparte's Gull:** A 1-year-old bird at Lakin Sl., Guthrie Co., on 11 Jul (SD) is one of the few recent summer records for Iowa.
- Ring-billed Gull:** I received reports from Appanoose, Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Dickinson, Emmet, Marion, Polk, Scott, and Story counties, the most being an estimated 250 that summered in Dickinson Co.
- Herring Gull:** There were 3 reports: 1 at Bettendorf on 3 Jun (PCP), a 2-year-old bird at Rathbun Res. on 16 Jun (SD), and a 1-year-old bird and two 2-year-old birds that summered at Spirit L. (SD).
- Casplan Tern:** There were reports from Adair, Appanoose, Calhoun, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Dickinson, Lee, Marion, and Polk counties.
- Common Tern:** I received details for all reports: 4 at Bettendorf on 3 Jun (PCP), 1 at Huron Island, Des Moines Co., on 6 Jun (PCP), 1 at Trumbull L. on 7 Jun (SD), 1 at Mud L. on 1, 3 Jul (SD), and 1 at Rathbun Res. on 16-17 Jul (SD).
- Forster's Tern:** Nesting was noted at Russ W.A. (Hancock/Winnebago counties), Ventura M., Zirbel Sl., Hottes L., Oppedahl W.A. (Palo Alto Co.), and Eagle L. (Hancock Co.) (SD).
- Least Tern:** Other than 1 at Mud L. on 1 Jul (SD), all reports were from the IPL Ponds. The most there was 9 adults and 7 fledglings on 12 Jul (SD, BB).
- Black Tern:** Spring migration was late with 125-150 at Dan Green Sl. on 3 Jun (JJD) and 47 at Big Creek L. on 5 Jun (SD); 20 at Twelve Mile Lake on 16 Jul included migrant fledglings (JJD).
- Black-billed Cuckoo:** The only reports were from Allamakee, Boone, Clay, and Sioux counties.
- Eastern Screech-Owl:** A nest with young was found at Union Slough N.W.R. (JAG).
- Burrowing Owl:** I received a report of 1 near Royal, Clay Co., on 15 Apr 1989 (Richard Lampe fide JJD, details); 1 was near Rock Valley, Sioux Co., on 24 Jun (JV), and another was s of Maurice on the Sioux/Plymouth county border on 7 Jul (JV).
- Chuck-will's-widow:** Besides the usual birds near Waubensie S.P., 1-2 were at Lake Wapello S.P. on 15 Jun and 1, 8 Jul (RLC, SD), and 3 were nw of Eddyville in Mahaska Co. on 6 Jul (JF).
- Whip-poor-will:** 2 were in NW Sioux Co. on 3 Jun (Dolly Zangger fide DCH), and 47 were heard in W Fremont Co. on 12 Jul (SD, BB, WRS).
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** I received reports from Allamakee, Fremont, Hardin, Kossuth, and Van Buren counties. That pretty well covers the state except for the northwest.
- Red-headed Woodpecker:** Harr commented that this species was the most abundant he had ever found it in NW Iowa.
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** A female at a nest s of Guttenberg, Clayton Co., on 22 Jun (SD), a nest with young near Decorah on 14 Jun (DK), another nest with young near Luster Heights,



- Allamakee Co., on 15 Jun (DK), and 1 female at Gitchie Manitou, Lyon Co., on 25 Jul (DCH) were the only reports.
- Pileated Woodpecker:** An injured bird at Wanata S.P., Clay Co., on 27 Jun (Linda Hinshaw fide JJD) was west of this species' normal range, while 1 at Holst F., Boone Co., on 4 Jun (RKM) was as far north along the Des Moines R. in central Iowa as this species has ranged.
- Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Singles at Rush L., Clay Co., and Pickerel L., Buena Vista Co., both on 2 Jun (JJD), and 1 at Yellow River F. on 3 Jun (MPR, BPR) were the last spring birds.
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** 2 in Fayette Co. on 1 Jun, 2 at Backbone S.P. on 1 Jun, and 1 at Ledges S.P. on 2 Jun were all identified by call (SD).
- Acadian Flycatcher:** Birds were reported from the usual places in Allamakee, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Henry, Lee, and Van Buren counties; 1 at Idewild W.A., Floyd Co., on 3 Jun (JLW) was out of its usual range.
- Alder Flycatcher:** Singles at Ledges S.P. on 3 Jun (SD), West Okoboji L. on 3 Jun (JJD), Trumbull L. on 7 Jun (SD), and near Decorah on 14 Jun (DK) were the last spring birds; 1 at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. on 23 Jul (RLC) and 1 there on 30 Jul (DP) were the first fall birds.
- Willow Flycatcher:** I received reports from Allamakee, Appanoose, Fremont, Jasper, Kossuth, Lee, Marion, Warren, and Wayne counties.
- Least Flycatcher:** The only reports were 3 at the Grannis Creek Access, Fayette Co., on 1 Jun (SD), 1 near Highlandville, Winneshiek Co., on 14 Jun (DK), and 1 near Decorah on 29 Jun (DK).
- Western Kingbird:** There were several reports from the usual stronghold in SW Iowa including a nest with young in Fremont Co. on 12 Jul (SD, BB). There were 8 near Turin, Monona Co., on 3 Jun (JF). On 15 Jun, 1 on the Simpson College campus in Indianola (JSi) was decidedly out of range.
- Eastern Kingbird:** Petersen found 14 on a Breeding Bird Survey in Cedar Co. on 22 Jun, well above the 8 he found in 1988 and 5 in 1987 (PCP).
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** 1 was at a farmstead n of Crawfordsville, Washington Co., from 12 May to 4 Jul (Dorothy Sands, \*JF, \*THK, DP). Another near Welch L., Dickinson Co., on 25 Jun (Rory Martinson fide DCH) was near where 1 was seen in spring.
- Horned Lark:** Kenne found 1 feeding a young cowbird near Algona on 15 Jul (MK).
- Purple Martin:** Both Mosman (93 nests, 345 young near Elkhart) and Van Dyk said the species had excellent success this year. A roost near Elkhart had 1,000 martins on 31 Jul (DDM).
- Bank Swallow:** There were 400 at Runnells W.A. on 30 Jul (AJ).
- Cliff Swallow:** 50+ were n of Nashua in NE Iowa on 1 Jun (MAP).
- Brown Creeper:** There were 6 including 5 males at Huron Island, Des Moines Co., on 6 Jun (PCP), 1 at Shimek F. on 29 Jul (RLC), 1 at Sny Magill A., Clayton Co., on 27 Jun (DK), and 1 at Effigy Mounds N.M. on 28 Jun (DK).
- Carolina Wren:** I received reports from Fayette, Fremont, Henry, Johnson, Lee, Monroe, Polk, Scott, Van Buren, and Webster counties, all basically in the usual range of this species but 1 nw of Elma, Howard Co., on 10 Jul (MJH) was out-of-range. This species clearly has recovered from the disastrous lows of a few years ago.
- Bewick's Wren:** The only report was 2 at Waubonsie S.P. on 11 and 17 Jun (DLR, details).
- Winter Wren:** The only report was 2 at White Pine Hollow on 27 Jun (DK).
- Sedge Wren:** Wilson commented that numbers were down, while I found this species to be common in land set aside for the Conservation Reserve Program in northern Iowa.
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** A nest was found at Clanton Creek W.A., Madison Co., (RCe), and broods were seen in A. A. Call S.P. and near Algona (MK).
- Eastern Bluebird:** Mosman (70 nests, 200 fledged near Elkhart), Bierman (200+ fledged at Cherokee), and Laub (20 hatched from 24 nests) at Rippey, Greene Co., reported good nesting success.
- Veery:** The only reports were from Allamakee, Boone, Dubuque, Fayette, Kossuth, Polk, Winnebago, and Winneshiek counties.
- Wood Thrush:** I had reports from Davis, Fremont, Jefferson, Mills, Montgomery, Polk, Van Buren, and Washington counties, all in the southern half of Iowa.
- Northern Mockingbird:** There were reports from Appanoose, Decatur, Jasper, Lee (2 sites), Monroe, Page (2 sites), Polk, Poweshiek, Taylor, and Van Buren counties, all in the southern half of Iowa.
- Cedar Waxwing:** A brood was reported in Madison Co., (EIA, EuA). Waxwings were quite numerous in Boone (SL) and Story counties (JJD).
- Loggerhead Shrike:** 86 nests were found in Adair Co. (David DeGeus fide JJD), the center of the Iowa shrike universe. Other reports were from Appanoose, Boone, Floyd (brood), Fre-

- mont (3 sites), Greene, Grundy (brood), Hardin, Jasper (4 sites), Kossuth, Mills, Ringgold (2 sites), Sioux, Story, Taylor, Van Buren, Warren, Washington (nest), and Wayne counties.
- White-eyed Vireo:** Other than several reported from Shimek F., there were singles in West Des Moines on 4 Jun (PA), DeKalb W.A., Decatur Co., on 19 Jun (SD), at Sny Magill A., Clayton Co., on 15 Jun (DK), and 1 that summered at Pioneer Ridge, Wapello Co. (SD).
- Bell's Vireo:** 1 or 2 were reported from Fremont, Jefferson, Marion, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Sioux, and Van Buren counties. Other than Sioux, all are in the southern half of Iowa.
- Solitary Vireo:** 1 was at Willow Sl., Mills Co., on 22 Jul (DLR, details)[2nd earliest].
- Yellow-throated Vireo:** 1-7 were reported from Fremont, Jefferson, Johnson, Lee, and Mills (brood) counties.
- Blue-winged Warbler:** Several were reported in Shimek F. and 11 were at Yellow River F. on 3 Jun (MPR, BPR); 1 at Hidden Bridge, Lyon Co., on 5 Jun (JJD) and 1 at West Okoboji L. on 12 Jun (NPB) were w of the usual range.
- Tennessee Warbler:** A late migrant was at Saylorville Res. on 5 Jun (SD).
- Northern Parula:** Several were reported at the usual sites in Shimek F. and Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. Other reports include 8 at Geode S.P., Henry Co., on 14 Jun (SD), 1-2 in Waubonsie S.P. on 30 Jun and 3 Jul (MPR, BPR, AJ), and singles at Yellow River F. on 4 Jun (MPR, BPR), SW Henry Co. on 15 Jun (SD), Fox Hills W.A., Wapello Co., on 16 Jun (SD), and Sand Creek W.A., Decatur Co., on 19 Jun (SD).
- Yellow Warbler:** 1 in Jefferson Co. on 19 Jun was feeding a young cowbird (DP).
- Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Singles were in N Warren Co. (AJ) and Holst F., Boone Co. (RKM), both on 4 Jun, near Bluffton, Winneshiek Co., on 29 Jun (DK), and 1 that summered in Yellow River F. (DK).
- Magnolia Warbler:** The only report was 1 in Yellow River F. on 16 Jun (DK)[2nd latest].
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** As many as 12 were at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (19 Jun, AJ). Other reports were 1 at Kettleson Hogsback W.A., Dickinson Co., on 6 Jun (\*DCH) and 5 at Geode S.P., Henry Co., on 14 Jun (SD).
- Cerulean Warbler:** Most reports were from the usual sites in Allamakee, Clayton, Lee, Monroe, Polk, and Van Buren counties; 2 near Red Rock Res. on 3 Jun (AJ), 1 at L. Ahquabi, Warren Co., on 9 Jun (AJ), 5 at Geode S.P., Henry Co., on 14 Jun (SD), and 1 at Sand Creek W.A., Decatur Co., on 19 Jun (SD) added some new sites within the usual range, while 1 at West Okoboji L. from 6 to 12 Jun (NPB) was well outside that range.
- Prothonotary Warbler:** Up to 8 were found in the usual haunts in Allamakee, Benton, Clayton, Des Moines, and Jackson counties; 1 found nesting at the Skunk River W.A. in Jasper Co. on 29 Jun (HZ) was a new site, while 1 at Kindlespire P., Clay Co., on 8 Jun and 4 Jul (SD), and 1 at Marble L., Dickinson Co., on 1 Jul (SD) were far out of the usual range.
- Worm-eating Warbler:** A family group at Shimek F. on 18 and 24 Jun (JF, RCE, JSi), 1 at Holst F., Boone Co., on 4 Jun (RKM), and 1 at Geode S.P., Henry Co., on 14 Jun (SD) were all the reports.
- Ovenbird:** Cecil found a nest with 4 eggs and a family group at Clanton Creek W.A., Madison Co., on 18 Jun.
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** Besides a family group at Fox Hills W.A., Wapello Co., on 16 Jun (SD), there were reports from Dubuque, Fremont, Henry, Lee, Madison, and Van Buren counties.
- Kentucky Warbler:** There were reports from Allamakee, Boone, Fayette, Fremont, Henry, Lee, Madison, Mills, Monroe, Polk, Van Buren, and Wapello counties, all within this species' usual range; 1 at Kindlespire P., Clay Co., on 4 Jul (SD) was well to the northwest of the usual haunts. This species is probably more widespread in Iowa than previously thought.
- Mourning Warbler:** 1 was at Echo Valley S.P., Fayette Co., on 1 Jun (SD), and 1 was in N Warren Co. on 4 Jun (AJ).
- Hooded Warbler:** Up to 4 in Shimek F. in Jul (JF, RLC), 1-2 in Yellow River F. on 3, 16 Jun (MPR, BPR, DK), and 1 in Brown's Woods, Polk Co., on 12 Jun (RKM) were the only reports of this elusive species.
- Canada Warbler:** The only report was 1 at Grannis Creek Access, Fayette Co., on 1 Jun (SD).
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** Besides the 2-3 at Shimek F. in Jun (RCE, AJ, MPR, BPR), the only reports were 1 at Pioneer Ridge, Wapello Co., on 16 Jun (SD) and 4 all summer at L. Hawthorn, Mahaska Co. (DK). Were chats absent or just unreported this year?
- Summer Tanager:** Besides the usual birds at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P., Shimek F., and Waubonsie S.P., 1 was s of Washington on 9 Jun (JF), a pair was at Fox Hills W.A., Wapello Co., on 16 Jun (SD), 1 was near Pioneer Ridge, Wapello Co., on 16 Jun and 9 Jul (SD), and 1 was w of Tabor, Fremont Co., on 12 Jul (SD), somewhat more reports than most summers.

**Scarlet Tanager:** Besides reports from its usual haunts in Allamakee, Dubuque, Fremont, Polk, and Van Buren counties, single males were at Marble L., Dickinson Co., on 12 Jul (DCH) and Idewild W.A., Floyd Co., on 16 Jul (JLW).

**Blue Grosbeak:** There were several reports from its stronghold in SW Iowa while Van Dyk said it was plentiful in Sioux Co. and Bierman found several pairs in O'Brien and Cherokee counties in NW Iowa; 2 in Van Buren Co. in Jul (JF) and 1 in Lee Co. on 7 Jul (SD) were the only reports from SE Iowa. Most interesting was 1 seen by a visiting birder n of Pilot Knob S.P. in NC Iowa on 20 Jun (RL).

**Dickcissel:** Both Van Dyk in Sioux Co. and Laub in Boone/Greene counties said Dickcissels were abundant while Petersen noted sharp increases on Breeding Bird Survey routes in Cedar (39 in 1987, 59 in 1988, 112 in 1989) and Clinton (31 in 1987, 71 in 1988, 92 in 1989) counties.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Singing males were at Hidden Bridge, Lyon Co., on 5 Jun (JJD) and s of Union Slough N.W.R. on 21 Jul (EIA, EuA).

**Lark Sparrow:** 1-6 were reported from Benton, Fremont, Jefferson, Lee, Taylor, and Warren counties.

**Savannah Sparrow:** An adult was feeding young in NW Union Co. on 15 Jun (RCe).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** 1-5 were seen by many at a site near Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. Other reports were 1 at Ringgold W.A. on 13 Jun (Mel Moe fide SD), 2 se of Centerville on 16 Jun (RLC, SD), 1 near Sand Creek W.A., Decatur Co., on 19 Jun (SD), singles near Drakesville, and Belknap, Davis Co., both on 8 Jul (SD), 1 s of Rathbun Res. on 9 Jul (SD), 1 near Milton, Davis Co., on 24 Jul (SD), and 4 in Appanoose and Lee counties on 12 Jun and 29 Jul (RLC). The bottom row of counties, especially in SE Iowa seems to be the best place to find this elusive species.

**Swamp Sparrow:** A family group was found at Zirbel Sl. on 23 Jul (JLW).

**Harris' Sparrow:** 1 at West Okoboji L. on 13-14 Jun was caught and banded (NPB). This is only the second summer record for Iowa.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** 2 males at Princeton M., Scott Co., on 3 Jun (PCP), 2 at Big Creek L. on 15 Jul (AJ), and nesting birds at Hendrickson M. (Dave VanWaus fide JJD) were outside of this species' normal stronghold in NW and NC Iowa.

**Great-tailed Grackle:** This species was found only at Lakin Sl., Guthrie Co., where there were 3 pairs and 3 nests on 10 Jun (SD).

**Orchard Oriole:** There were reports from Appanoose, Cass, Emmet, Fremont, Harrison, Kosuth (brood), Marshall, Palo Alto (brood), and Story (nests at 2 sites) counties. The Armstrongs found this species in all areas of the state except NE Iowa.

**House Finch:** I received reports from Benton, Black Hawk (3 nests), Calhoun, Cerro Gordo, Cherokee, Clayton, Greene, Howard, Jasper, Montgomery (2 nests), Polk, Poweshiek, Sioux, Story (nest), Warren, Winnebago and Winneshiek counties. Clearly this species is found almost statewide and is consolidating its range. Sinclair said cowbirds parasitized a nest in Warren Co., so maybe the House Finch really has arrived.

**Pine Siskin:** 1 n of Elma, Howard Co., on 23 Jun (MJH) was the only report.

## CONTRIBUTORS

### \* = documentation only

Pam Allen (West Des Moines); Reid Allen (West Des Moines); Eloise Armstrong (Booneville); Eugene Armstrong (Booneville); Carl J. Bendorf (Iowa City); Neil P. Bernstein (Cedar Rapids); Dick Bierman (Cherokee); Tanya E. Bray (Omaha, NE); Robert Cecil (Des Moines); Dave Conrads (Cedar Falls); Ray L. Cummins (Centerville); James J. Dinsmore (Ames); Steve Dinsmore (Ames); Bery Engebretsen (Johnston); Jim Fuller (Iowa City); James A. Gallagher (Ames); Douglas C. Harr (Larchwood); Mary Jo Hartogh (Elma); Ann Johnson (Norwalk); Matthew Kenne (Algona); Thomas H. Kent (Iowa City); Darwin Koenig (Montezuma); Ted LaGrange (Clear Lake); Sharon Laub (Rippey); Richard Levad (Grand Junction, CO); Francis L. Moore (Waterloo); Darwin D. Mosman (Elkhart); Robert K. Myers (Perry); Marietta A. Petersen (Walnut); Peter C. Petersen (Davenport); \*Randy Pinkston (Iowa City); Diane Porter (Fairfield); Beth Proescholdt (Liscomb); Mark Proescholdt (Liscomb); Douglas L. Rose (Glenwood); Jim Sinclair (Indianola); John Van Dyk (Sioux Center); Jan L. Walters (Mason City); Barbara L. Wilson (Hastings); and Hank Zaletel (Colo).

## OTHER OBSERVERS

Bart Ballard (Ames); Babs Padelford (Bellevue, NE); and W. Ross Silcock (Tabor).

## COMMENT

There were few extreme weather fronts this summer, and they probably had minimal effect on nesting birds. The dry conditions led to the opening of some of the annual set-aside and Conservation Reserve land for haying and grazing. Since these areas total 1.4 and 1.8 million acres respectively, there is vast potential for nesting by species such as meadowlarks, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Sedge Wrens. Reports of those species seldom show up in these pages but my own belief is that they have prospered in recent years.

Among the migrants, there were few late spring and no early fall warblers reported. For the past several years, I couldn't tell which direction the shorebirds were headed. This year there was generally a mid-to-late June period with no sightings and then an earlier-than-usual start to the fall migration in late June and early July, as evidenced by several record early dates. Again the lack of water here and to our west may have concentrated birds in a few places where several birders could find them, especially Union Slough.

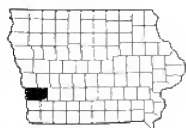
My thanks to the dedicated group of reporters. Your reports were generally clear, precise, and timely, which made my job easier.

## NOTES

### RED-THROATED LOONS AT LAKE MANAWA

ROBERT K. MYERS

April 29, 1989 found me making my usual birding trip around southwest Iowa. At noon I stopped at Lake Manawa State Park, Pottawattamie County, for lunch and to check out the lake. I immediately noticed two small loons sleeping with their heads in their back feathers as they floated in the north end of the lake. Occasionally one would raise its head, look around, and go back to sleep. They seemed small, about 1.5 times the length of American Coots swimming about the same distance away. Common Loons should have looked larger. Both loons had brownish backs, and no white flecking could be seen. One did seem slightly darker. Both were whitish on the front of the neck and sides of the head. The darker bird appeared to have a dark patch on the front of the neck about half-way down from the head. I could not make out the color of the patch. Both loons had thin, pointed, somewhat shorter bills. Their heads were also more rounded than Common Loons (no knob above the eye was apparent). I was sure that these had to be Pacific or Red-throated Loons and the marks that swayed my decision were the angle of the bill and the birds' posture. The bills were definitely bent upwards—this was noticeable even when the head was horizontal. The loons frequently tilted their heads back, greatly accentuating the upward effect of the bill. This effect was similar to that displayed by other Red-throated Loons I have seen.



I then made my way to a pay phone to notify some Omaha birders and Ross Silcock. I understand that a few others did get to see one or both birds during the next several days.

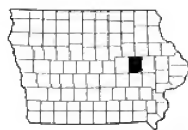
I was concerned about the lack of white flecking on the backs of these mostly basic-plumaged birds, but T. S. Robert's key in *A Manual for the Identification of the Birds of Minnesota and Neighboring States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1932) gives a description of Red-throated Loon in first nuptial plumage that is acquired by a partial prenuptial molt in late winter. This plumage is much like the adult, but with less noticeable throat patches and mostly plain backs.

RR 2, Box 153, Perry, Iowa 50220

## MISSISSIPPI KITE AT DUDGEON LAKE

DAVID J. CONRADs, MARC PHELPS, THOMAS H. KENT

At 5:05 p.m. on 5 June 1989, Conrads and Phelps observed a gray raptor about the size of a small crow perched about 10 m up in a snag above a backwater slough in a floodplain forest on the Dudgeon Lake Game Area, Benton County. Their first assumption was that it was a Mississippi Kite. It was observed for approximately 10 minutes from a distance of 20 m with binoculars. Marc took several photographs as it sat facing the camera. The bird was completely gray underneath without markings. The tail was square-ended and had three dark bands on the underside. There appeared to be a black mask around the eyes, and its eyes were a brilliant orange-red. When approached for a closer photograph, it flew to the west. The absence of black shoulders and a white tail eliminated Black-shouldered Kite. The bird's silhouette in flight revealed pointed wings, quite similar to a falcon, but its body was slimmer and flight more buoyant than a falcon. It did not return that evening. Upon returning to the Benton County Conservation Office, using Clark and Wheeler (1987), the bird was identified as a subadult Mississippi Kite.

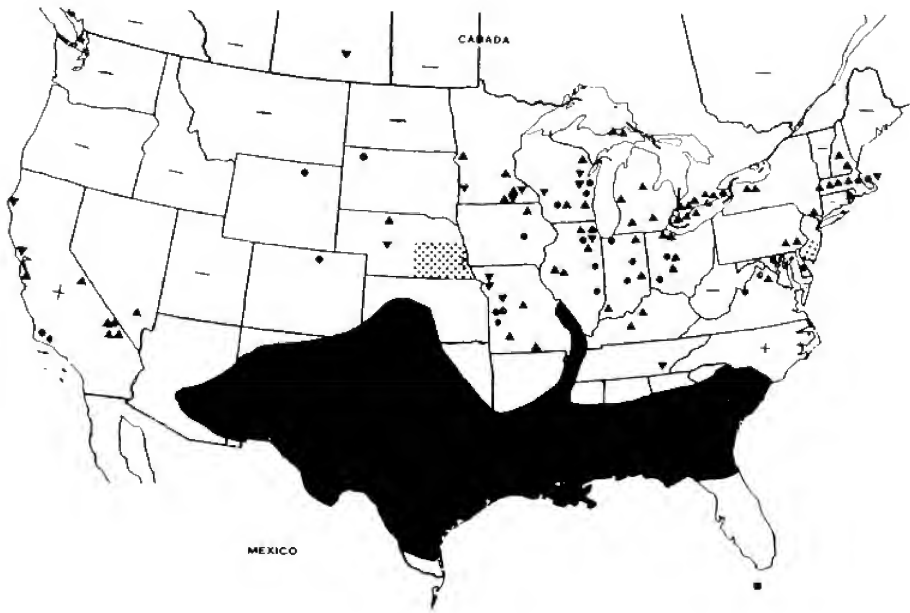


On 6 June at about 2:00 p.m., the authors found the bird again and noted the kite-like flight as it remained on the wing hunting insects for more than an hour. It sailed most of the time and was observed from about 50-400 m. The tail was square when not fanned, somewhat curved when fanned, and had four to six fine white bars on the underside. From above, the primaries were black and the rest of the underwing gray. The body appeared dark to gray, lighter toward the head. At one point we saw two kite-like birds, but could not make a positive identification of both. The kite had also been observed that morning by several others. Conrads and Phelps were unable to find the bird again on 7 June at about 7:00 p.m., but on 8 June two birds were found by Jim Fuller and Jim Scheib and photographed. The last sighting was on 9 June.

The Mississippi Kite occurred in Iowa before 1900 and was probably casual (Dinsmore et al. 1984). Although there have been three reported sightings since 1900 (Dinsmore et al. 1984), the only one besides the current record that has been accepted by the Records Committee is from 29 May 1978 at Cardinal Marsh, Winneshiek County (Kent and Silcock 1984).

In the 1950s, this species began to recover from a population decline that had occurred in the late 1800s (Parker and Ogden 1979). Since the 1950s there has been a steady increase in extralimital sightings of Mississippi Kite (map). The greatest number of northward strays are subadults found in mid-May through June with a much smaller fall peak in September. Mississippi Kites migrate to southern South America in winter. Winter records cited include a in Texas and one in the Florida Keys. There are February records from North and South Carolina. The early extralimital records are from Nevada in March and California and New Hampshire in early April. Two late October records are from New Jersey and Minnesota.

Extralimital Records of Mississippi Kite



	1		1	6	65		35	4		8	19	2	
Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Jun	Jul		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
	1	1	0	3		4	10		29	45	52		
	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960-64		1965-69	1970-74		1975-79	1980-84	1985-89		

The pattern of vagrancy involves the East Coast, the Midwest, and California (map). Iowa represents a relatively blank spot in the Midwest, suggesting the possibility that this species has been overlooked. Spring and fall sightings in southeast Nebraska now make the species regular there. Several of these sightings have been just across the river from Iowa.

The sighting at Dudgeon Lake is typical in that the birds were subadult, they were found in early June, and they spent their time kiting over or sitting silently in riparian woodland. The most likely spots for future sightings would seem to be along rivers in southwest and eastern Iowa.

LITERATURE CITED

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Kent, T. H., and W. R. Silcock. 1984. Report of the I.O.U. Records Committee for 1984. *Iowa Bird Life* 55:56-58.

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*Subadult Mississippi Kites at Dudgeon Lake Area, 6-8 June 1989.  
Photos by Jim Scheib (top), Marc Phelps (lower left), and Tom Kent (lower right).*



## SLATY-BACKED GULL IN SCOTT COUNTY

JAMES FULLER

On Sunday, February 12, Ann Barker reported a dark-mantled adult gull on the Mississippi River above Le Claire, Scott County, to the Iowa Birdline. She had surmised a Lesser Black-backed Gull, but could not rule out other dark-winged gulls because she had only been able to scope it floating down the river at 500 yards and so was not able to view leg color and wing pattern.



On a beautiful, clear Valentine's Day morning (February 14) I started searching for Ann's bird at Le Claire with no success and so continued downstream. At 10:40 a.m., I had reached the Moline, Illinois, waterfront and there at mid-river, all by itself, was a dark-mantled gull sitting on a rock seawall. It was in the identical location where I had seen my first Iowa Great Black-backed Gull in December 1986. Shortly after I got the bird in the scope, it took off and flew in a large circle. Then, wonder of wonders, it proceeded directly at me, finally settling down to stand with a group of Herring Gulls on shelf ice a mere 60 yards away.

The first clue that this was not a Lesser Black-backed Gull was the bright pink legs and feet. The mantle and upper wings appeared dark grey, not black, and the bird's size and general head and bill shape were the same as that of the Herring Gulls. As the bird walked around picking at shad in the ice, it stretched its wings and flew short distances several times. The wing had a very wide white trailing edge and what appeared to be an unusual pattern of white areas at the wing tip. At this point, feeling that the bird was very possibly a Slaty-backed Gull, I roused Pete Petersen from his Wild Bird Shop. He put up the "gone birding" sign and grabbed his camera. After Pete confirmed the probable identification, we hurried off to pass the word.

Features of the bird as noted by several other observers, including Ann Barker, Tom Kent, and Pete Petersen, were as follows: The general size and posture was the same as that of the nearby Herring Gulls; head and relative bill size were also similar. The mantle and upperwing were a dark gray, but not jet black, except for the outer primaries which were quite dark. The crown and nape had fine streaking, typical of winter adult gulls, and the head, tail, and underparts were otherwise white. The bill was yellow with a subterminal red spot on the lower mandible. The eye was yellow and had a dark smudge around it, especially distally. Legs and feet were a bright pink, especially the feet, and differed from the gray-pink of the Herring Gulls.

The upper wing had a broad trailing edge of white and a very narrow leading edge. The trailing edge was apparent on the standing bird as a white area, which was larger than that of the adult Herring Gulls. The outermost primary had a large (longer than wide) subterminal white area as well as a small white tip, with a narrow dark area between. Apical white spots were seen on all of the rest of the primaries through the 5th. The 8th through the 5th primaries also had subterminal white marks which became closer to the trailing edge, thus producing a white arc into the wing tip. The under surface of the wing was light compared to the upper surface and the flight feathers were an opaque gray. The pattern of white spots, although fainter, could also be seen on the underwing.

Similar species were excluded as follows: Lesser Black-backed Gull has yellow (not pink) legs and does not have the wing tip pattern of this bird. Great Black-backed Gull has a jet black mantle, larger size, and different wing tip pattern. Western Gull should have a larger bill, a clear white head, less white in the trailing edge, a darker underwing, and inconspicuous sub-terminal spots on the upper wing tip. Yellow-footed Gull is similar to Western Gull but with yellow legs.

This is the first record for Iowa. The first accepted sighting for Slaty-backed Gull in central North America was in the St. Louis area on 20 December 1983 to 29 January 1984 (Goetz, Rudden, and Snetsinger 1986). That bird was seen by many Iowa birders, including myself. Two other hypothetical, but possibly correct, records are from Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan, on 28 November 1981 (Goetz, Rudden, and Snetsinger 1986) and at Two Harbors, Minnesota, from 4 to 28 January 1968 (Green 1969).

There are only three West Coast records south of Alaska: 1 March 1974 at Clover Point, Victoria Island, British Columbia (Roberson 1980); 11-12 November 1986 at Port Hardy, Victoria Island, British Columbia (*Am. Birds* 41:134); and 31 December 1986 to 4 January 1987 at Elwha River, Clallam County, Washington (*Am. Birds* 41:319-320).

The most bitter arctic cold front of the winter brought wind chill factors as low as 50 degrees below zero Fahrenheit in Iowa the first few days of February. Siberian expresses, such as that one, have been associated with the appearance of arctic birds in the mid-continent area. There had been one of the most bitter outbreaks of the century just prior to discovery of the St. Louis bird. The normal range of the Slaty-backed Gull is the Asian coasts of the North Pacific and Bering Sea, and, in winter, south to Japan. It is a rare fall migrant and summer visitor to western Alaska and the Aleutians.

The gull's presence in the Quad Cities area attracted national attention, and reports were included on the North American rare bird alert as well as the "hot lines" of all surrounding states. Many birders from a number of states searched for it, and most were successful. It was estimated that as many as 200 birders were in the area on Saturday, February 18th. The bird was sighted along an approximately 15-mile stretch of the river from above Le Claire to Credit Island at Davenport. This is comparable to the 19-mile range that the St. Louis gull used. For several days in a row, it consistently came in to the Moline riverfront area in late afternoon. Otherwise, there was nothing predictable about its habits. The last confirmed sighting occurred on Tuesday, 21 February, when it came in to roost at Moline very late in the day.

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Green, J. C. 1969. Observation of a black-backed gull. *Loon* 41:55-56.  
Roberson, D. 1980. *Rare Birds of the West Coast*. Pacific Grove, CA: Woodcock Publications.

6 Longview Knoll, RR6, Iowa City, IA 52240.

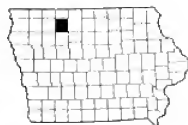


*Slaty-backed Gull on Mississippi River on 12 and 18 February 1989. Photos by Pete Petersen (top) and John Hoogerheide (bottom).*

## MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD IN PALO ALTO COUNTY

ED THELEN

At 1:30 p.m. on 19 March 1989, my wife, Linda, and I were traveling south on N-40 just north of Emmetsburg in Palo Alto County when I spotted a bluebird perched on a fence post next to the road. After turning around and pulling off the road, we were amazed to see a male Mountain Bluebird. It was readily identified by its uniform blue plumage including breast, head, and back. It flew after a few minutes to another post. While flying the undertail feathers showed white coloration. Its size was similar to an Eastern Bluebird. The eyes, bill, and feet appeared all dark. The head, back, shoulders, rump, and tail were a bright blue; the breast, throat, belly, and flanks were a more subdued blue. We observed the bird for about 20 minutes. I returned to the area the following afternoon but failed to locate the bird.



*RR Box 7414-A, Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360.*

## REVIEWS

*Wildfowl—An Identification Guide to the Ducks, Geese and Swans of the World* by Steve Madge and Hilary Burn. London: Christopher Helm. 1988. 298 pp., 47 color plates, hardbound \$35.00.

REVIEWED BY JAMES J. DINSMORE

This, the third in a series of specialized identification guides (others cover seabirds and shorebirds), considers all 155 waterfowl species found worldwide. Color plates illustrate each species in several plumages and in flight. For many species both sexes, eclipse plumages, and/or juvenile birds are shown. A map showing breeding and non-breeding ranges, a brief verbal description of its range and habitat, and a summary of key field marks are on the page opposite the plate. Species accounts include field identification (both sitting and in flight), a detailed description, voice, bare parts coloration, measurements, geographic variation, habits, habitat, distribution, population estimates, and references. A glossary, three pages of references, and an index (which doubles as a checklist) end the book.

This book is too large (6 x 9.5 inches) to be a field guide. I would rate the plates, which are what most observers will use most, as generally quite good. They are especially strong for the sea ducks (e.g., scoters, eiders, Oldsquaw) and illustrate a wide range of plumages. I considered the 39 species of waterfowl reported from Iowa and compared the number of different plumages shown in this book with four other books that Iowa birders often use. The following are the total number of plumages shown in each: Peterson Eastern Guide (81), Robbins (86), National Geographic guide (116), Bellrose (128), and this book (156). Thus the book does have more illustrations than the others. However, the white-breasted form of the blue phase Snow Goose that we commonly see in Iowa is not illustrated.

I found several things that bothered me. Most irritating was the placement of the maps and written material on the pages facing the illustrations. In 28 of 47 plates, the written information is not placed directly opposite the bird's illustration. Thus, the written material on the Snow Goose is at the top of the page but the illustration is at the bottom of the facing plate. Each species is numbered on the plate and in the description so you can match them up, but it should have been easy to rearrange the material to match better. I was surprised to find that for population estimates of North America species they used 1975 data; such counts are made yearly and more recent data are available. Surprisingly, they claim the American Wigeon is the most numerous North American duck although their data clearly show otherwise. On the other hand, they do mention the 1984-1985 Bean Goose at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge. Overall, I give this book high marks. It will do little to help identify the common plumages that we often encounter, but it will be useful to Iowans who want to identify the out-of-range or odd-plumaged bird.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010

*Ornithology—An Ecological Approach* by John Faaborg. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 1988. 470 pp., hardbound \$51.33.  
REVIEWED BY JAMES J. DINSMORE

People who are interested in birds often seek sources of information beyond the standard field guide. This textbook, the latest in the field, helps fill that need. The author, now at the University of Missouri, grew up in Jefferson, Iowa, and once was a member of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. The book's 16 chapters are organized into five areas: birds and flight (evolution, structural adaptations, flight), diversity of birds (speciation, diversity, taxonomy, survey of groups), strategies for survival (foraging, adaptations to extreme climates, migration), reproduction (physiology, behavior, reproductive adaptations), and birds and humans (economic value, field techniques, conservation and management). This coverage is similar to that found in other textbooks. There is a short list of suggested readings at the end of each chapter and 12 pages of references at the end of the book. The book is fairly well illustrated with diagrams, but there are only a few photographs.

Faaborg emphasizes an ecological and evolutionary approach and gives less emphasis to topics such as organ systems and reproduction than another popular text (Welty and Baptista. 1988. *The Life of Birds*, 4th ed. Saunders). Potential buyers should know that even in 470 pages there is not room to cover a topic thoroughly or to provide specific information on individual species. Faaborg gives a good overview of the science of ornithology, but it is not a source book for all of your questions about birds. Instead it provides a general introduction to ideas related to birds so that you can explore those topics further. One shortcoming is that the specific sources of information are not cited in the text; presumably the references at the end of the book will provide details, although it will not always be clear where one should start to find that information. I like the book and plan to require my students to use it.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010

*Atlas of Wintering North American Birds—An Analysis of Christmas Bird Count Data* by Terry Root. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1988. 336 pp., 613 maps, hardbound \$60.00, paperbound \$35.00.  
REVIEWED BY PETER C. PETERSEN

This book presents the distribution in United States and southern Canada of more than 600 species based on Christmas Bird Counts. Data are from the winters 1962-1963 through 1971-1972 at 1,282 sites censused at least once during this period. It is unfortunate that the data are so outdated, but data from more recent counts were not available on computer. For each species of at least moderate abundance, two maps are presented. One shows distribution at intervals of 20, 40, 60, and 80 percent of maximum abundance for the species. It is two-dimensional and is very straightforward. The other map is three-dimensional, and in many cases scanty data provide a misleading picture. The introduction provides the mathematical basis for the plotting methods used and addresses some of the problems in interpreting the maps.

The text summarizes habitat preference, historic distributional data, diet, and flock companions if any.

The maps are the key feature of the book. For most species the basic distribution pattern probably has not changed significantly since the late 1960s, but for birds such as the House Finch it has changed greatly. The three-dimensional maps also over represent isolated observations of a single bird. Eleven transparent overlays allow one to compare distribution with several geographic and weather variables.

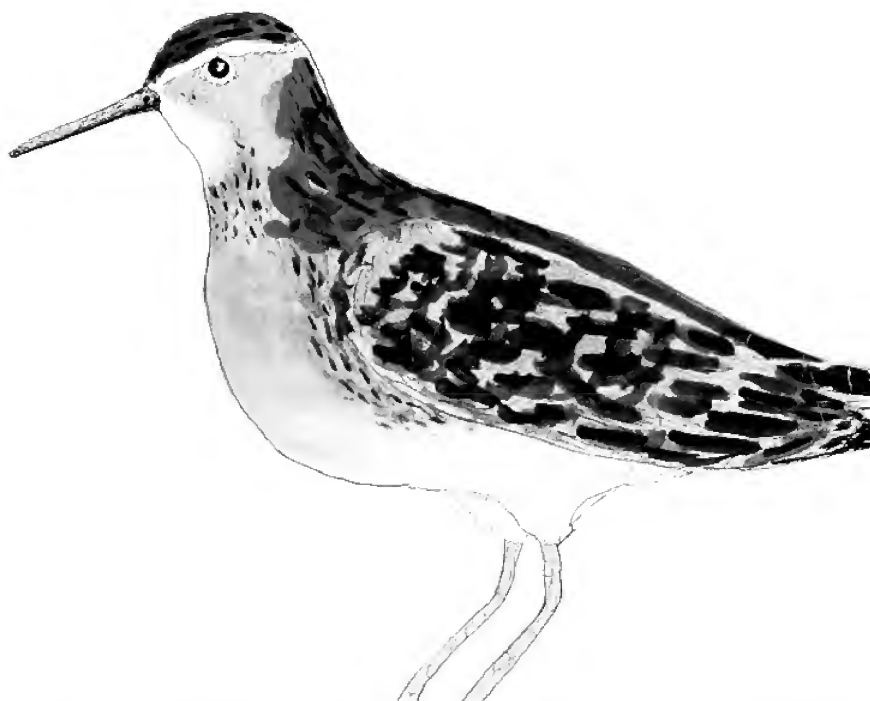
Much of the problem with this book lies in the nature of the counts themselves. Several factors bias all Christmas Bird Count data, and at best the data provide a measure of relative density of each species. Count locations are usually chosen to provide a maximum species count, not an even sample of habitat. Some counts have hundreds of observers while others rely on one or two parties, but all counts cover areas of the same size. Some observers are very skilled, while others may miss the species that the better qualified observers would have found. Weather variables frequently introduce great biases. Finally, the count is not conducted during the period when most species have reached their winter range. The book has several shortcomings, but it does present for the first time on a continent-wide basis an analysis of Christmas Bird Count data. Try to examine a copy before making the purchase.

*235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803*

## LETTERS

### SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER

FROM NICHOLAS S. HALMI



So Iowa had to wait 14 years for its second *C. acuminata*. Now that there is so much fuss made (at long last) about the three plumages of shorebirds, Pete could have added to his article that this was a juvenile (as was mine). It also occurred to me that a watercolor I made the night of the sighting (with the kids' paints) might be of some interest to the repository of Iowa documentations, so here it is. Remember, in 1974 there was no color picture of a sharp-tail in juvenal plumage in any guide, and I was really struck by the amount of orange in the chest. Since then, this has become old hat.

200 Winston Dr., Cliffside Park, NJ 07010

[The articles referred to above are: Halmi, N. S. 1974. Sight record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper near Iowa City, Iowa Bird Life 44:106 and Petersen, P. C. 1989. Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Davenport. Iowa Bird Life 59:90.]